

Point of Order

If properly drafted the long title would indicate its purpose of terminating specific agencies by name. This would of course uncover the real purpose of the bill in the guise of cutting costs and eliminating some redundant bodies to eliminate a number of government agencies that in the course of effectively carrying out their responsibilities have become thorns in the government's side.

Superficially the principle of the bill, the government purports, is to reduce the cost of government. In reality, however, it raises the principles of maintaining—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment, the hon. parliamentary secretary is rising.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to what my hon. friend was saying. It seems to me that if there is a point of order to be made it ought to be made with expedition.

What my friend is doing is anticipating debate under Government Orders and we have not got to that yet. He is in fact beginning a debate that has not yet been called.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his intervention.

I am listening very carefully to the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond. I think he is reaching his point and I know that he will be as concise as he always is.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I am happy for the intervention of the parliamentary secretary. Perhaps I might be able to facilitate the process whereby Bill C-93 in its present form would not come forward.

I wish to remind the House of Beauchesne's 6th edition dealing with this particular matter in the following citation 634:

Speakers have expressed deep concern about the use of omnibus bills, and have suggested that there must be "a point where we go beyond what is acceptable from a strictly parliamentary standpoint". Nevertheless, the practice of using one bill to demand one decision on a number of quite different, although related subjects, while a matter of concern, is an issue on which the Speaker will not intervene to divide the bill.

Citation 635 states:

In the case of an omnibus bill, the Speaker has encouraged the use of motions to delete a clause at the report stage, pursuant to Standing Order 76(2) to permit the House to decide a specific issue contained in

an omnibus bill, even though the motion might offend the principle of the bill.

In support of my argument I would like to quote from *Hansard* of March 1, 1982 when the hon. member for Calgary Centre said in the House, as reported at page 15479, with regard to an energy bill which had been tabled at that time:

That is the title of an omnibus bill with a capital *O* and a capital *B*. Indeed, I would argue that it would be more accurately described as an "omnifarious bill", meaning of all sorts, or perhaps an "omnific" bill, meaning all-creating. Certainly there has never before in the history of Parliament been included in one proposed bill such an incredible hodge-podge and mish-mash of such disparate items.

Furthermore, in the final quote given to the Chair, the same hon. member went on to quote from the Hon. Lucien Lamoureux, as reported in the House of Commons *Journals* for January 26, 1971, at page 284:

However, where do we stop? Where is the point of no return? The honourable member for Winnipeg North Centre, and I believe the honourable member for Edmonton West, said that we might reach the point where we would have only one bill, a bill at the start of the session for the improvement of the quality of life in Canada which would include every single proposed piece of legislation for the session. That would be an omnibus bill with a capital *O* and a capital *B*. But would it be acceptable legislation? There must be a point where we go beyond what is acceptable from a strictly parliamentary standpoint.

I suggest in conclusion that this particular bill because of its width, because of the various agencies that it affects, because of the way in which it changes public policy in this country, ought to be sent back to the drafters and divided accordingly and then brought back to this House.

As Bill C-93 stands as an omnibus bill, I hope the Chair would take my arguments into consideration and send this bill back to the drafters.

I raise this point now, in response to the parliamentary secretary, because there were indications that we would be proceeding with second reading today. Maybe that is not the case. If that is not the case, that indeed gives further comfort and further ease to the government to take the bill back to the drafters and do so appropriately.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have a sense of having been here before. I think this whole argument has been gone through as recently as March 30 of this year. The budget of course was approved last March 11 and an issue was raised by other members, I think the member